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great epoch in history, but can never be revived." But they "have changed all that now"!

In conclusion, we need hardly remark that Rush's "Occasional Productions" constitute a book of deep and permanent interest, which must take its place in the historical library by the side of the volumes of Sparks, Everett, Bancroft, Trescott, and Wheaton. Could we be assured of a succession of American statesmen and diplomatists of the same stamp as Richard Rush, we might confidently calculate for the future upon good management at home and reputable representation abroad.

ART. IX. — *Lectures on the English Language*. By GEORGE P. MARSH. New York: Charles Scribner. 1860. 8vo. pp. 697.

We have already expressed our high sense of the worth of these Lectures; else we should not employ their title as our text, without some detailed analysis of their contents. Our present purpose is to discuss but one of the many fruitful topics presented by Mr. Marsh, namely, the diversities in the English tongue as spoken in England and in America.

It has for some time been the fashion, among a certain class of semi-political critics, to favor the impression that the language of the two great branches of the Anglo-Saxon family is gradually diverging into two appreciably distinct dialects. On the one side, the English critics, ignoring the inherent tendency of every language to expand itself so long as there is any creative vigor left in the nation that uses it, or at any rate unwilling to acknowledge that *we* have any such co-ordinate inheritance in and power over the common language as that *we* may rightfully give it such expansion, have been too ready to stigmatize all the contributions which the vigor of American life, or the new exigencies of American literature, have made to the language, as innovations, corruptions, barbarisms. On the other side, along with much foolish talk about a national American literature, has sprung up among many American

writers a disposition to claim that there is, and of right ought to be, full license allowed to this great, free American people to modify the language, as they have modified customs, institutions, and laws, quite independently of foreign models, so as to adapt it to the peculiar wants and characteristics of the American mind; and though we do not find many writers going so far as to insist upon an American language, yet they do insist upon being absolved from all allegiance, and even from any special deference, to English use and authority.

Now it is gratifying to those who love the English language and English literature more than they love or hate any distinctions of British or American, to be able to confront this folly with the wonderful fact, that, in spite of the many causes which for two centuries have been co-operating to make two distinct nations, the language of both is so nearly the same, that each has more and wider varieties within its own circuit than the two when compared in the aggregate. Indeed, when we consider how sensitive language is to external circumstances, to the influences of climate and scenery, to the changes, physical, intellectual, social, and moral, through which a people may pass; when we remember that for a full half of this period of two hundred years — and that the first half, when of course changes in the language would have fixed themselves most permanently — there was of necessity but little intercourse between the two countries, and that books were dear, and the press was but feeble; and when we take into the account that for the last century there has been a constant influx of foreigners of all nations, who have mingled freely with our own people, and can hardly have melted into the mass without tinging it to some extent, — the fact that, in spite of all this, the language of the two nations is substantially the same, is one of the most wonderful and gratifying in the whole history of the Anglo-Saxon race. It seems to say: “Split the race in two, and put them in opposite quarters of the globe; then set them at variance, so that for decades of their history they shall hate each other as only members of the same family can hate; send hordes of barbarians to mingle with the emigrant branch, bringing new elements into the general character, and new sounds and idioms into the common language, — and yet the

two branches will go on developing, independently in the main, their characters, modes of life, institutions, and laws, and at the end of two centuries they will be substantially one people in every one of their grand characteristics, and in their language, which is the exponent of all the rest." This result most emphatically verifies the deep-seated and essential oneness of the two nations, and rebukes alike those politicians who are so ready to foment British and American antipathies in the one great Anglo-Saxon family, and those critics who would encourage a British and an American dialect of the one common English tongue.

But having been led thus far into a statement of the circumstances tending to produce divergence between the speech of the mother country and that of her emigrant children, and finding much more cause to wonder that this divergence is so small than that it is sufficient to be discernible, we feel bound — at any rate the inquiry is an interesting one — to account for this surprising uniformity of speech in the two countries, in spite of the apparently strong influences tending to the corruption and confusion of the English language in America. In pursuing this inquiry, we ought to take special notice of the fact, that, before the English language had become domiciliated in this country, it had reached a point of maturity beyond which no very great and radical changes were to be expected. If it had been planted here during its formative process, as was the case with the Greek language in the colonies, its after-growth would doubtless have been affected by the diversity of circumstances to which it would have been exposed in the two countries. If, for instance, — supposing that possible, — English colonists had settled America a hundred and fifty years earlier than they did, bringing with them the English of Chaucer and Wicliffe's Bible instead of that of Shakespeare and King James's version, it can hardly be doubted that an entirely different and an essentially ruder dialect would have grown up in the Colonies. But as it was, the English colonists brought with them a full-grown language, which had been the speech of the Court and of Parliament and of the tribunals of justice for two hundred years, which was now to a considerable extent the language of the University and of scholars, whose sinewy

vigor and succinct proportions betokened the early manhood of its career, and whose form had been forever fixed in some of the noblest literature it can be expected ever to embody, — in the poetry of Spenser and Shakespeare, and in the prose of Hooker and the English Bible.

It requires no unpardonable amount of enthusiasm in the American scholar to believe that the circumstance of the present version of the English Bible having appeared at the time it did, had some providential reference to the wants of the new empire just then about to rise in the West. This version, destined so long to be the oracle of the Anglo-Saxon race, was published just nine years before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth. Now it is safe to assert, and would have required no uncommon powers of prophecy then to foresee, that, whatever new version might thereafter appear in England, the Bible which those worthies brought with them, which they read and prayed over in the *Mayflower*, out of which they derived the authority for their new social and their old ecclesiastical polity, which was their palladium through all the dangers and trials of their early settlements, on which their first civil officers had been sworn, out of which the first marriages and deaths had been solemnized, would have such a hold on the memories and affections of their children and children's children, that it would be impossible here to supplant it by any other for many generations. Happily — providentially, we will say — this version was one of such excellence that it was not supplanted by any other at home ; but has continued to this day to teach the two nations, morning and evening, for two and a half centuries, along with its lessons of love to God and love to man, attachment — reverence almost — for the purest and raciest English that can be found in our literature. Indeed, we imagine that a due estimate of the influence which the English Bible has had, during so long a time, in keeping the language of these two Bible-reading people from corruption and from divergence, would at first sight appear exaggerated and fanciful.

Thus much being premised, — that the English language when planted in America had attained a point in its development at which more was to be feared from its not being maintained as it was than from its not being improved, and that

its shape had been fixed in a sterling literature, especially in the English Bible, — we must recognize, as foremost among the influences which contributed to its conservation, the intellectual character and habits of the American people. The leading men in all the Colonies, and the majority in New England, were men of considerable education and culture. Not a few were scholars from the Universities. From the very outset, the intellectual wants of the new people were as clamorous and as faithfully consulted and provided for as those of the body. In the midst of all their hardships and straits, the colonists were a reading, thinking, studious people. They were fond of hearing sermons, of perusing books of divinity and devotion, of discussing in public questions of theology and morals, and of haranguing and being harangued on all sorts of subjects. And this character, thus early exhibited, the American people have always maintained. Though not an eminently conversational people, we are more given to reading and to speech-making than any other people in the world. And it is easy to see that this constant familiarity with the language of books and of public addresses would keep the general ear true to the purer standards of the language.

Still, no doubt, much importance ought to be attributed to the influence of intercourse between this and the mother country in maintaining uniformity of language. For, as a matter of fact, the time when Americanisms sprang up in the greatest number and most abounded in the current literature was just the time when there was the least intercourse, personal or literary, between the two countries. If one wished to make a list of Americanisms, he would find more in the publications of the last quarter of the last century than in those of any other period of the same length. On the other hand, we think it safe to say that there never has been a time since this country had a literature of its own, when fewer deviations from English usage were current than now. For a considerable part of the colonial period, the language was studiously subjected to English authority, and seems to have varied from it but little. As we draw toward the period of the Revolution, the diminishing deference to and dependence upon the mother country show themselves in more marked and increasing departure

from English usage. The maximum of divergence is attained during the period intervening between the Declaration of Independence and the war of 1812, — since which time, the greater literary activity of this country, increased facilities for travel, the freer circulation in either country of the literature of the other, and the attention paid to the study of philology in both countries, have brought the language of the two nations, by an almost equal approach, nearly to convergence. There is doubtless a good deal that is fanciful in this mode of statement, and many glaring exceptions might be easily adduced; but we believe that, if not too literally applied to individual cases, it fairly represents the general history of Americanisms.

What is an Americanism? Not any chance misuse of English of which an American writer, or even a coterie of American writers, may be guilty, nor the vulgarism of a particular clique or locality. It is unjust to invest these occasional anomalies and provincialisms with the dignity of national peculiarities, and to label a list of them laboriously scraped together from all the trash and rubbish of literature, and from the offscourings of society, “A Dictionary of Americanisms.” Let our Joel Barlowisms, our Websterisms, the slang of the backwoods, the bar-room, and the stump, the dialects of Mississippi boatmen, of Bowery Boys, and of Yankee pedlers, be styled and denominated by their specific names; but to publish them to the world as “Americanisms,” is to convey the impression that they form part of the common speech of the country. It would be equally fair and just to cull the choice phrases of the London thieves, and the uncouth barbarisms of Staffordshire miners and Yorkshire laborers, and, interspersing with them the distorted and grimaced monsters of the Carlyle diction, and the vagaries of Pinkerton, to label the whole so as to convey the impression that all this is a part of the common speech of England. An Americanism is a word or phrase, old or new, employed by general and respectable usage in this country in a way not sanctioned by the best standards of the English language. We do not admit that every new word which happens to see the light first in this country is therefore an Americanism. The English language is no longer the language of England merely, and while we allow that

everywhere there ought to be deference to English authority, as due to the land which nurtured the language from its infancy, and which still, by her genius, literature, and learning, does most to illustrate and preserve it, we still hold that any legitimate contribution made to its growth or improvement in any portion of its domain is entitled to be counted part of the *English* language. So we hold that any new word, if honestly born, and adapted to general needs and usages, is not American, or Australian, but English. On this principle such words as *Presidential* and *Congressional* are not justly stigmatized as Americanisms; for, though of American origin, they are framed according to the analogy of the language, are obviously necessary words, and would doubtless have been formed and used long ago in the mother country, if there had been equal occasion for them. The same may be said of *immigrant*, *prairie*, and many other words which will readily suggest themselves. Again, a word may be used in a sense characteristic of this country, and yet not be an Americanism. For instance, in England, the adjective "sick" (though not the noun, *sickness*) is colloquially restricted to "sickness at the stomach," — so much so, that the expression "sick with a cold, or fever," would mark one as an American, — who would nevertheless be in the right, and would be using no Americanism, but good standard English. Again, the spelling of such words as "center," and "traveler" is not an Americanism, though to be found in a few American books, but a *Websterism*, not adopted and sanctioned by such general usage as to entitle it to the national appellation. On the other hand, a word or a construction may be an Americanism, though a collector of rarities may find it in some standard English author. Here, we think, is a fallacy in the commonly received logic of language, which deserves to be exposed. That a particular usage is unauthorized is a *universal negative*, proverbially difficult to maintain, and in the matter of language extremely hazardous to assert. Your reading — somewhat extensive, you flatter yourself — furnishes no instance of such a usage. Your ear — attuned, as you think, to the genuine tones of the language — pronounces it harsh, foreign. A hundred well-trained eyes concur in rejecting it as unmistakably spurious. But publish it to the millions

of eyes and ears and memories, and a thousand to one, some one will apprise you that in some past century of English literature, some author, standard and representative of his time, it may be, has given his sanction to this very usage, — and your universal negative is disproved. He may have thrown it off in mere indolence, or wantonness, or even ignorance: he may have been driven to the wall for a rhyme; it is at any rate a *ἄπαξ λεγόμενον*, — but there it is, and you are answered. Your objection is pronounced “frivolous and vexatious.” But are you answered? Is every freak, even of a great writer, to be revered and made a standard? There need be no other refutation of this favorite argument than a *reductio ad absurdum* by applying it to a few standard writers. Shall we use *to lay* intransitively because Pope did, or employ double superlatives because both Shakespeare and Milton did? The true principle is that laid down by Quintilian: “Etiam si potest nihil peccare qui utitur iis verbis quæ summi auctores tradiderunt, multum refert non solum quid *dixerint*, sed etiam quid *PERSUASERINT*.”* The assertion that a particular usage is unauthorized in general, or is an Americanism in particular, does not depend for its validity on the impossibility of finding a single instance of it in the whole range of reputable literature, but upon the preponderating testimony of good use, past and present, — testimony negative, as well as positive, — the testimony of silence, as well as that of express sanction.†

We propose now to inquire into the actual amount and kind of divergence between the present recognized and habitual speech of this country and that of England.

Whenever an Englishman and an American discuss the rival claims of their respective countries to pre-eminence, both

* Query: Would not this be a good motto for the proposed Dictionary of the London Philological Society?

† For example, — we were under the impression that the use of “drank” instead of “drunk,” for the past participle of *drink*, was an Americanism; but we succeeded in finding two or three instances of this use in English poets, — enough to furnish an opportunity for the kind of rejoinder alluded to. We have therefore not ventured to maintain the charge in the open field, — though here, under cover of the privilege allowed us in a note, we do slyly assert that this *is* an Americanism.

are sure to appeal triumphantly to the superior character of their respective languages. "What horrible work you Englishmen make with your *h*'s and *v*'s! What barbarous dialects are spoken in your provincial districts! It is n't at all certain that two freeborn Englishmen from different counties can understand each other. Really, you will have to come to America to learn the English language!" On the other hand, the thoroughbred Englishman retorts: "What ill-breeding you Yankees show in your speech! What a disgusting slang one hears in your villages and on your plantations! What shockingly low expressions your professional men use!" True all, in the main; and any attempt to state in few words the relative claims of the English language as spoken here and in England, must amount to this, — that here the many speak better than in England, the few not so well. In England a man's language is, in general, a fair test of his education and social position; here, one man's language, like his clothes and his manners, is about the same as his neighbor's, and all, on the whole, very good, and very much above the average in England. And this is our boast, — if we must boast, — that the spectacle of so many millions, covering nearly a whole continent, all speaking the same tongue with such uniform and general purity, without any variations approaching to a diversity of dialect, is the proudest triumph the English language, or any human language, has yet achieved.

It would be naturally enough expected that as in everything else, so in language, Americans would not feel themselves so much bound by conventional rules as the English. Now, perhaps more than any other language, the English is subject to rules wholly conventional and arbitrary. The elements of which it is composed are so heterogeneous, its tributary wealth has been to such an extent conglomerated into a mass, rather than organized into a living unity, that to a great degree its only integrity is due to the maintenance of the minute rules imposed by use upon individual cases. How unlike in this respect it is to such a language as the Italian, in which every word is pronounced exactly as it is written, and which in all its departments is so regular that it seems more like the invention of a single mind, deliberately planned and elaborated

under the constant supervision of law, than a growth under the various disturbing influences of social life! Imagine, for instance, the English become a dead language, its literature remaining, but all dictionaries and philological treatises lost, and Macaulay's New-Zealander studying it by grammar, as we study Greek and Latin. What a figure our orthoepy and etymology would make in such a grammar! What an endless investigation of anomalies the study would necessarily be! Now in this country various circumstances have given the language a tendency toward regularity and uniformity. Not only is it a general characteristic of the American mind, in all departments of activity, to systematize in disregard of conventionalisms, but, owing to the circumstance of our being a reading rather than a conversational people, many anomalies, especially in pronunciation, have become first unfamiliar, then repulsive, and finally outcast. Such, for example, has been the fate of the words "clerk" and "sergeant," still pronounced *clark* and *sargeant* in England. Such once promised to be the fate of "wound" (*woond*) and "deaf" (*děf*). A feeling of dissatisfaction with this anomalous condition of the language, a conviction that these apparent crudities ought to be and might be removed, and the language further developed into something more nearly approaching regularity and consistency, has often sprung up, and sometimes in some slight degree asserted itself during the last two hundred years. But we apprehend that this reform-spirit mistakes the genius of the language it would curve into propriety; that, as it is not a homogeneous language, it cannot be reduced to perfect regularity; that, after all, many of its seeming inconsistencies are only so in seeming, and not in reality, and many more add to its variety and strength. The issue of all the experiments in this direction very emphatically confirms our view. While the result of this tendency in our country has been some few manifest improvements now generally adopted, — as, for instance, the omission of the *u* in the termination *our* in certain words, — still it must be confessed that but few of the many changes proposed have won or are likely to win their way to permanence. Many which twenty years ago promised to live, have been abandoned, and Webster, their champion, who prob-

ably owed much of his former popularity to these changes, is now for the very same reason likely to fall below his deserved reputation, while his own editor and reputed successor has given them up as hopeless. Whether this tendency to force uniformity upon the language will maintain its ground in this country, and what success it is to have in bringing our refractory tongue under the laws of analogy and consistency, remain yet to be seen. The indications, however, are now decidedly unfavorable to such innovations. It is gratifying to see that Worcester's Dictionary, which bids fair to exercise a predominant influence over American speech for many years to come, takes the true scholarly position, that long-established good usage is not to be set aside by any appeals to abstract principles. Meanwhile, no better counsel can be addressed to any who in either country are seeking to improve the language, than the following from the pen of Henry Rogers : —

“Whatever deflection may have taken place in the original principles of a language, whatever modification of form it may have undergone, it is at each period of its history the product of a slow accumulation and countless multitudes of associations which can neither be hastily formed nor hastily dismissed; that these associations extend even to the modes of spelling and pronouncing, of inflecting and combining words; and that anything which suddenly breaks in upon such associations impairs, for a time at least, the power of the language.”

The most marked specific difference in the language, as used by the English and by Americans, is that which an intelligent traveller would notice in the language of conversation. The Americans, as has been intimated, are not an eminently conversational people. They are talkative, but the talk does not naturally assume the style of conversation.* Every one who has happened to overhear to any considerable extent the talk of the rail-car, the inn, or the sidewalk, must have noticed that the moment two persons leave the common topics of business or chitchat, and broach subjects of general interest, they

* Our strictures upon the lack of a colloquial dialect as characterizing American speech, are somewhat more strictly applicable to the Northern than to the Southern States.

fall to speech-making, and use the formal and ambitious phraseology of the harangue. Whether it is a constitutional trait, or whether it is due to the peculiar discipline of American institutions, at any rate the manifest destiny of Americans is toward speech-making whenever they open their mouths. The English, on the other hand, have a constitutional dread of speeches. Even in Parliament, the occasion hardly presents itself once in a session which justifies or makes tolerable, according to the sentiment of either House, anything above "animated conversation on public business," as Parliamentary oratory has been so happily defined. We have heard it suggested, — and we think the suggestion quite reasonable, — that the horrible practice of hem-hem-ing and ha-ha-ing which so disfigures the speeches of British statesmen and diners-out, is partly affected, in order to quell all suspicions of premeditated eloquence. At any rate, the honorable gentleman who has just floundered through his ten-minutes after-dinner speech, with infinite abstractions, and amid the wrecks of sentences, will retire with you into the drawing-room, and join at once, and with perfect ease, in the natural and equable flow of conversation. Not that the English are remarkably happy in conversation: far from it. The versatility and sprightliness which are necessary to good conversation belong much more naturally to the American than to the English character. But the language of conversation heard in cultivated English families is certainly the most perfect of its kind, — choice and pure as the language of scholars, but simple and natural as the language of peasants. Here, on the contrary, in consequence of the speech-making propensity — the *lues oratoria* — and of the universal habits of reading, conversation is carried on in a style either decidedly low or decidedly high. Only in a few specially cultivated families — *old* families, if we may venture the obnoxious expression — do we hear that medium style of speech, that natural, plain, unstudied utterance, equally removed from pedantry and vulgarity, which is the charm of conversation. The talk of the educated abounds in bookish expressions and constructions, and in words of Latin derivation. The book-rule, for instance, that it is inelegant to end a sentence with a preposition, has such terrors for us, that we compel ourselves to the formality

of promoting the particle to the beginning of relative clauses. Many expressions, which our inkhorn prudery would condemn as improper and indelicate, are of every-day use in England, and do not shock ears the most polite. This bookish fastidiousness of ours would obviously tend to let slip out of use and memory many of the *idiotisms** of our tongue, those condensed, economical, pithy, sometimes rough expressions through which the homely vigor of a language finds utterance. As a matter of fact, many such expressions, still current in England, are out of vogue here. The educated substitute for them the tamer, less expressive circumlocutions of books; but that warmth of feeling in the vulgar, which instinctively aims at something forcible and telling, has, for lack of these genuine old bits of Anglo-Saxon feeling and wit, manufactured a host of slang phrases, most of which are as extravagant and unnatural as they are low and coarse.

It is worthy of notice that the general standard of appeal in questions of language is different in the two countries. In England there are certain classes and professions in which it is almost a point of honor and conscience to speak good English, and the members of which do, as a matter of fact, speak with such acknowledged care and accuracy, that their practice is recognized as authoritative. In spite of the horrid work occasionally made by Irish and country members, the usage of Parliament is accounted good, and is appealed to as such. That such a word was so used by a dignitary of the Church, by a prominent member of the bar, or by the Times newspaper, is usually decisive of its correctness. Now where have we a class of men to whom any one thinks of appealing? Our only resort is the Dictionary, and thus a lexicographer who can, by one means or another, get the ascendancy, forces all his caprices and notions up to the dignity of a standard. Who ever quotes Congressional usage, unless to show how

* Mr. Marsh discriminates thus excellently between *idiom* and *idiotism*: "*Idiom*, in its proper sense, signifies the totality of the general rules of construction which characterize the syntax of a particular language and distinguish it from that of other tongues. *Idiotism*, on the other hand, should be taken to denote the systematic exemption of particular words, or combinations of particular words, from the general syntactical rules of the language to which they belong."

low a style of language prevails in our national legislature? "In truth," said Mr. Webster, "I must say that, in my opinion, the vernacular tongue of the country has become greatly vitiated, depraved, and corrupted by the style of our Congressional debates." The newspaper press of this country, adopting too often the morals and the politics of the mob, takes their language too, and what is in other countries, and ought to be everywhere, the conservator and the model of pure language, here gives sanction and currency to all sorts of slang, — to the terms of the card-table, the ring, and the pit. Compare, merely on the score of language, the leading and most widely circulated dailies of New York with those of London, Paris, Brussels, and Berlin, and see in part the explanation of the fact, that in no country is so much slang spoken by educated people as here. If there is any class of men in this country to whose example and influence the ordinary speech of the country is under obligations, that class is unquestionably the clergy, — even with all the faults justly chargeable upon them. They certainly, as a body, use better language than any other class in the community, and their example has long been almost the only oral witness against the wide-spread tendency to vulgarisms and slang in the popular speech of the country. Now we know, and are glad to recognize, the compensating fact, that here every one speaks so comparatively well that there is no room for such broad distinctions as those which prevail in England, and which constitute the title of certain classes to give the law. Yet it still remains true, that the natural tendency of the spoken language is always toward corruption and vulgarity, unless upheld by the actual practice of the influential men, — and these are, in the main, the professional men of a community.

Before passing on to notice differences in the collocation of words, in phrases, and in single words, it ought to be suggested that there is a class of men in this country who studiously conform themselves to English models, and never allow themselves to depart from what would be sanctioned by the highest actual and present English authority. In the criticisms which follow, the practice of such men is not taken into the account. We regard as American usage whatever is sanc-

tioned by so large a number of respectable writers and speakers as to be general, though not universal.

It is very common with all but the most scrupulous writers in this country to put an adverb between the "to" and the infinitive; as, "to clearly prove," instead of "to prove clearly," or "clearly to prove." One may meet with this construction now and then in careless English writers, but in American publications, both newspapers and solid books, it occurs constantly and without rebuke. *Help* almost always in conversation, and very generally in writing, loses the "to" which should follow it before an infinitive. "Will you help me *do*," instead of "*to do*, a thing?" "Either" is applied to one of several, though properly it applies only to one of two. Both Webster and Worcester sanction this usage, the former even placing it first in order. We think it would be difficult to find an example of this in any good modern English author. The elliptical form of sentence ending in "to" with an infinitive suppressed, which most Americans allow themselves to use in conversation, — "I have never seen Niagara, but should very much like to," — is never heard in England: in such cases the Englishman ends his sentence with "to do" or "to do so." Indeed, Americans in England notice that the English require of the word "do" an unusual amount of vicarious work.

There is a class of words which, though strictly Americanisms, according to our definition, are occasionally found in respectable English writers. They seem, however, to be denied in England the full citizenship which our laxer naturalization laws have here accorded to them. Such words are "talented," "lengthy," "progress" (verb), "jeopardize." Of *talented*, a word sanctioned by respectable and general use in this country, John Sterling says, "It is a hustings word, invented by O'Connell." Coleridge says of it, "I regret to see that vile, vocable *talented* stealing out of the newspapers into the leading reviews and most respectable publications of the day." The word seems to be derived from the parable of the talents, and is formed on a false analogy: but as it has no substitute, it will probably win its way to respectability. "Lengthy" and "progress" are vindicating their claim to a

place in the language as necessary words, and are beginning to get the *entrée* to the higher circles. "Therefor," which seems an almost indispensable word here, is hardly known in England. We must except from our commendation of clerical English in this country the abominable word *happify*, which we believe is entirely confined to the pulpit: and if our clerical brethren should be disposed to "take up a labor" with us for our want of reverence for the cloth, we should have two counts against them instead of one. The use of "alone" for *sole* — "the *alone* mode of doing a thing" — is another un-English pulpit phrase, not, however, confined to the American pulpit.*

Of course there is in each country a large class of words denoting objects, institutions, and processes peculiar to the country, and not current in the other. We do not use "scutching-machines," nor drink "swig," nor (thank Heaven!) purchase "advowsons"; neither do the English meet in "bees" and "caucuses," and choose "selectmen." But there are a few words belonging to the common written language which are still in full use in England, but almost obsolete here. "Whether," meaning *which of the two*, as in the English Bible, "Whether of them twain did the will of his Father?" "yon" and "yonder," demonstratives always implying a gesture, and thus more expressive than *that* and *there*, which have almost supplanted them; and "over" for "too," — are examples. "Over," used in this sense, is heard in conversation nearly as often as "too" in England, but seems to be so little used here that both Webster and Worcester feel themselves obliged to give separate places to above fifty adjectives compounded with over, — "over-bold," "busy," "credulous," "eager," &c., — though why they should not, for parity of reason, have gone through the whole list of adjectives, it would be difficult to say. The word "se'nnight," especially in the expression "this day se'nnight," is not wholly obsolete in England, though it is considered antiquated. It is sometimes heard in Parliament in notices of bills.†

* In a sermon lying before us, by Rev. Henry Melvill, the word is thus used several times.

† The word *fond* retains in Yorkshire its original meaning of *foolish*, — "Don't be so fond," — a meaning which is obsolete in conversational English elsewhere.

There is another class of words, which in form and meaning belong to the common language, but which are so overtaken in one or the other country, that they seem to belong there exclusively. Such are the words, "guess," "reckon," "calculate," and "presume," in different portions of this country; "shocking" and "nice," in England. "Guess," in precisely our colloquial sense, is found in Locke, and "reckon" in the English Bible; but as Dominie Sampson could not ope his mouth without letting out "Prodigious!" so some Americans are sure to "guess," "reckon," "presume," or "calculate," "every day i' the hour," while the Englishman seems to express every degree and kind of approbation by the epithet "nice," and of disapprobation by "shocking." The use of the word "party," to designate a person one does not wish to name, is common among Englishmen of middle rank.*

There is quite a large class of words used in different senses in the two countries. The provincialisms (not Americanisms) "ugly," meaning *cross*, "clever" for *good-natured*, and the use of the words "smart," "baggage," "lumber," "store," "fix," will at once suggest themselves. "Sick" has been mentioned as having a restricted meaning in England, "ill" being its substitute as the general word. "Plantation," in England, means a piece of land planted with trees. What we call "cotton cloth" is there "calico" printed calico being called "prints," as sometimes with us. "Cambric," in England, is fine white linen.

There seems to be a greater readiness to admit and enfranchise foreign words in the speech of this country than in that of England. We do not forget the dissonance which Carlyle and his barbarous crew are guilty of; but while in England these half-Anglicized Germanisms are confined to a clique, here they are in every one's mouth, and are threatening to Teutonize the language. The most conspicuous form of this innovation is the wholesale manufacture of compound nouns after the German, — "stand-point," "night-side," "life-thoughts," "poet-soul," and the like. The ear at first revolts from these

* Our familiar question, "How do you get *along*?" becomes, in England, "How do you get *on*?" and, strangely enough, in Scotland, "How do you get *endways*?"

hybrid forms, and the less tolerant English ear utterly refuses to give them a place in the language; but they are here passing unchallenged into common use. The partiality for French shows itself in the preference of many French over corresponding English words; for instance, "depot" for "station," "bureau" for "drawers," "vest" for "waistcoat." The same tendency shows itself in the pronunciation of foreign proper names, especially names of places. Here the favorite pronunciation inclines to preserve the foreign sounds and accents in such words as *Mont Blanc*, *Berlín*, *Turín*, *Brusséls*,— so also *Sultán*,— whereas in England these words are Anglicized into *Mount Blanc*, *Bérin*, *Mílan*, *Brússels*, *Súltan*.

We next compare the language of the two countries with respect to pronunciation. Here, doubtless, we shall find the greatest divergence, because here the influences of climate, habits of life, and all causes that can affect the physical organization, make themselves most directly felt. So far as *tones* are concerned, our utterance is unquestionably feebler, flatter, and less musical than that of the English. We are mimicked all over the world by speaking through the nose. Doubtless this difference is partly owing to difference in animal vigor,— not of individuals, but of the races; for we do not by any means find that the largest-chested men in this country make the roundest tones, nor the feeblest men in England the flattest. Still it does not seem to us that this will wholly account for the phenomenon. We suspect that something is due to the subtle working of moral causes,—of influences growing out of character and spirit; for are not national as well as individual tones the product and the expression of inward character? But the analysis which should detect the secret channels in which these causes work must be delicate indeed,— much more delicate, we apprehend, than Leigh Hunt was capable of when he referred this peculiarity of tone to "moral and moneyed causes which induce people to retreat inwardly upon themselves, into a sense of their shrewdness and resources; and to clap their finger in self-congratulation upon the organ through which it pleases them occasionally to intimate as much to a by-stander, not choosing to leave it wholly to the mouth." The fact, however accounted for, is patent enough.

The American traveller in England comes home enraptured with the conversational music he has heard in English parlors, and not infrequently is ingenuous enough to describe his mortification at the sound of his own voice, as he seemed to himself, in Virgil's phrase, "*argutos inter strepere anser olores*," like a goose hissing among tuneful swans.

As regards articulation, the Americans, we think, have a natural advantage over the English in a superior delicacy of structure of the vocal organs. Very many Englishmen apparently have to contend with a thick and unmanageable conformation of the organs of speech, which occasions the spluttering and mouthing so common in their public speaking. That the Americans have great natural facility for clear and fine articulation, is shown by the readiness with which they acquire the pronunciation of foreign tongues, and by the fact that, with proper early training and care, they do attain to remarkable grace of utterance. It still remains true that very much more importance is attached to articulation in England than here, that more pains is taken in training the young to habits of clear utterance, and that on the whole the English is more conscientiously articulated by educated persons in England than by the same class in this country. We mean by this to say, that the consonants are more distinctly and duly uttered, — that, for instance, "*shrink*" and "*shrine*" would not, as with us, be softened into *srink* and *srine*, "*suggest*" into *sudjest*, "*arms*" into *alms*. On the other hand, there is a tendency in this country to more distinct syllabication and more marked secondary accent in long words. The English say "*int'r'sting*," "*circ'mst'nces*," "*diction'ry*," tripping lightly over all the syllables after the accent, articulating plainly all the consonants, but almost eliminating the vowels; while we put a secondary accent on the penultimate syllable of long words, and give to the others as much stress as to unaccented syllables in short words. It is this peculiarity which brings upon Americans the charge of drawling, and which occasions the remark of foreigners to which Mr. Marsh alludes,* that they can understand an American more easily than an Englishman.

* Lectures on the English Language, p. 672.

The abuse of the aspirate in England among all classes except the highly educated, — its systematic rejection from all words entitled to it, and its equally systematic imposition upon words not entitled to it, — is a practice so consistently perverse as to be justly accounted one of the strangest phenomena in the history of language. That the aspirate should be neglected where it belongs, is not perhaps remarkable, nor without parallel in other languages. It is in good use disregarded in a large number of English words, as in *humor*, *honor*, *humble*, and the like, and the same tendency is observable in all the European languages.* But that it should be so persistently used where it does not belong has not been accounted for, so far as we know, save by attributing to the common English ear an utter and hopeless depravity in the matter of the aspirate. May we then broach our conjecture, that at one time the aspirate was in colloquial English almost or entirely lost, but that, when the language came to be more extensively read, the attempt to rectify this anomaly, brought thus to notice in the written language, introduced the present awkwardness and confusion in the use of the *h*?

This explanation receives countenance from the fact that in our version of the Bible, and in other literature of the same period, *an* is found instead of *a* before all words beginning with *h*, which shows that since that time, that is, since the English became to any considerable extent a reading people, there has been a restoration of the aspirate to many words which once omitted it. This view is further corroborated by the experience of any Englishman who attempts to rectify his misplaced *h*'s by education. If he has learned where they properly belong, he always betrays the same anxiety about them that a foreigner does about our *th*. Many of our readers will remember how frequently Kossuth, in his over-anxiety

* "The Modern Greeks, the Italians, the Spaniards, and the Portuguese have lost the sound of *h* altogether, though they still retain it in their orthography. It is scarcely heard in French, except in very emphatic utterance, and some orthoepists deny that it is used at all. The present tendency of all the European languages is to its absolute suppression, and it is not impossible that it may vanish from our orthoepy as completely as it has done from that of the South of Europe." — "Were it not for the influence of printing, the rough breathing of the *h* would probably long before this have ceased to be heard in English." — Marsh's Lectures, pp. 493, 674.

to utter this troublesome sound correctly, would get it upon wrong syllables and sometimes at the wrong end of a word. So one of Punch's characters is described as being totally out of place in refined society because "he had been cruelly deprived of his *h*'s in his early youth by his parents: and though he had tried in after life to replace them, they were no more natural than a glass eye, but stared at you as it were in a ghastly manner out of the conversation, and pained you by their horrid intrusions." There is, we think, a growing tendency in this country to omit the aspirate in combination with *w*: we hear *wen*, *wile*, *wite*, for "when," "while," "white."

The interchange of *v* and *w*, of which so much is made in caricatures of the cockney dialect, has been very much exaggerated, or has almost gone by. You may hear now and then the *v* beginning a word softened toward *w*, but only among the very lowest people.

The recognized sound of *ou* in England is flatter than what is in this country considered the normal sound. The same is true of long *u*, which here has an improper sound approaching very nearly to that of *oo*.

There are a few single words the pronunciation of which bewrays an Englishman in America, and *vice versa*. The sound of *a* in *wrath*, as heard from almost any Englishman, approaches very nearly to the sound of *o* in *broth*. The same sound is given to *a* in the word *vase*. "Schedule," here universally pronounced *skedule*, is in England pronounced *shed-ule*. The word *clerk*, there sounded *clark*, has been mentioned. It is very common in England to aspirate the last syllable of *exhaust*. A few precisians take great pains to preserve the distinct sound of *t*, in the terminations *ture* and *tian*, ending the penultimate syllable with the *t*, and beginning the next with the sound of *y*; for instance, *nāt-yure*, *Christ-yan*. Such speakers are, however, there as here, so few, that, although theoretically in the right, they do not escape the charge of affectation.

There are no important differences between the orthography of the language in England and the non-Websterian orthography in this country. The *u* is there still retained in "honor," "favor," "labor," and words of that kin.

The general result of such a comparison of the English of England and of the United States as we have instituted is substantially this : — that the written language is almost identified in the two countries, a somewhat greater laxity in the admission of new and questionable usages being chargeable upon us ; that the better education and more general habits of reading of the American people result in a common speech much above that current in England ; but that while there the liberally educated, following the advice of Cicero and the example of Burke, aim always to speak their best, and so have a style of colloquial English peculiar to themselves, as pure and simple as it is elegant, — here the same class of men allow themselves to use the language of their inferiors in culture, — a practice which, if not abandoned, will oblige us always, as now, to look to the mother country for the highest examples of spoken English.

ART. X. — 1. PROF. AGASSIZ *on the Origin of Species*. American Journal of Science and Arts for July, 1860.

2. PROF. PARSONS *on the Origin of Species*. American Journal of Science and Arts for July, 1860.

THE scientific world and a large surrounding district, including many who, without being investigators themselves, take a deep interest in the results of investigation into the laws of nature, have been thoroughly aroused and excited by the publication of Mr. Darwin's speculations. Many are dazzled by the ingenuity which he displays, and do not at once see that facts are wanting for a sufficient basis of so broad a theory ; and not only so, but that facts inconsistent with his theory are carefully kept out of sight, and are left to be brought forward by others, who discern the difference between the actual laws of nature and those processes which Mr. Darwin has so ingeniously proposed to substitute for them, and for the creative action of a Supreme Being. The constant demands of Mr. Darwin upon our belief, his constant assump-